



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

November 21, 2017

The path forward

The Journal Gazette

11/21/17

As the prelude to the Indiana legislative session that begins in January, Organization Day usually offers more ceremony than substance. But Gov. Eric Holcomb has already offered a blueprint for the lawmakers convening in Indianapolis today. His Next Level Agenda for 2018 focuses on the same broad areas he hit in his first agenda last year: the economy; the infrastructure; the workforce; the drug epidemic; and government service. This time, Holcomb wants to drill deeper. Many of the specifics are spot-on. In the economic realm, for instance, Holcomb wants to encourage research, development and testing of driverless vehicles. For a state tied so closely to the automotive industry, that's forward-looking common sense. His support for "the best elements" of the Regional Cities and Stellar Communities initiatives shows understanding of the need to ensure the rest of the state doesn't get left behind as Indianapolis and central Indiana prosper. Indiana now is on a path to maintain and improve its roads and bridges, but being competitive in a global economy requires a broader definition of infrastructure. Holcomb wants to increase the availability of broadband, add more domestic and international air routes and develop a fourth port. He also wants a commission to take a look at how the state's water supply and sewage disposal are managed – another reminder that policymakers need to look beyond the next biennium. Holcomb has once again wisely chosen to include the drug crisis among his priorities, and his proposals are practical and enlightened. He wants to crack down on dealers even as he offers more options to help addicts, and he focuses on the state's crucial need for better data. The most detailed and specific portion of the agenda comprises Holcomb's plans for workforce development. Many of those proposals are rightly aimed at providing more direct paths for Hoosiers to succeed at industrial and technical jobs. Some of those jobs are going unfilled right now, even as families struggle to make ends meet, and a well-trained workforce will help Indiana compete for new companies and new industries.

<http://www.journalgazette.net/opinion/editorials/20171121/the-path-forward>

Road work in home stretch as winter approaches

NWI Times

Andrew Steele

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The two-year Restore 94 project that's snarled traffic on Interstate 94 this construction season is reaching its final stages as winter approaches. A significant portion of the work will wrap up Wednesday, according to the Indiana Department of Transportation. Concrete patching near the Illinois state line will extend beyond that, and work on the busy stretch from Kennedy Avenue to Interstate 65 will continue into mid-December. "Assuming weather cooperates, traffic should be back in its normal configuration by that time," said Doug Moats, media relations director for

INDOT's Northwest District. The \$45 million project included paving from Illinois to Michigan. Permanent pavement markings will need to be done next spring, but can largely be done at night. And, "there will be no major resurfacing work on I-80/94 next construction season," Moats said. Work will continue through December on U.S. 30 in west Lake County, and on Broadway, he said. Milling and paving on Broadway between 61st Avenue and I-94 will pick up again in April and is expected to be completed by June. The most significant interstate work will be on I-65, from Merrillville to Lowell, where the project to add a lane in each direction is scheduled to run through fall 2018. The \$62 million project also includes new bridges over the Kankakee River. Work this season will have an impact on traffic patterns in the area between U.S. 231 in Crown Point and Ind. 2 near Lowell. On I-65, traffic will shift toward the inside shoulder to accommodate 8-foot outer shoulders. And, traffic on U.S. 231 and Ind. 2 at the interstate interchanges will remain one lane in each direction during the winter. Next year also will see an increased level of activity resulting from funding provided by new gas tax and other fee-based revenue. A total of 57 projects in Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties are included in the state's Next Level infrastructure plan for 2018. http://www.nwitimes.com/business/local/road-work-in-home-stretch-as-winter-approaches/article_c8c0f7e2-8b08-558f-a324-de168bcb387.html

Deadly Corridor: Turning US 30 into a freeway

WANE

Brett Thomas

11/16/17

FORT WAYNE, Ind. (WANE) It is one of the most highly traveled roadways in northern Indiana, second only to Interstate 90. As many as 30,000 vehicles travel US 30 on any given day. More than 30% of those vehicles are trucks. It's an economic artery for Fort Wayne, Columbia City, Warsaw, Plymouth and dozens of towns and villages in between. But it is also a deadly corridor. Standing sentry along the stretch of road between Fort Wayne and Columbia City are at least a half dozen crosses representing a tragic untimely death. FORT WAYNE, Ind. (WANE) It is one of the most highly traveled roadways in northern Indiana, second only to Interstate 90. As many as 30,000 vehicles travel US 30 on any given day. More than 30% of those vehicles are trucks. It's an economic artery for Fort Wayne, Columbia City, Warsaw, Plymouth and dozens of towns and villages in between. Mayor Daniel says he is heeding the advice. Columbia City and other municipalities along the route have been holding town halls and informational meetings for months to gather input, ideas and concerns directly from local citizens. He says something will eventually be done about US 30, and rather than having INDOT dictate to local governments a plan hatched in Indianapolis, he wants city leaders along US 30 to lead the discussion with their own plans. The cost of the project could prove prohibitive. It's estimated turning US 30 into a freeway between Fort Wayne and Valparaiso would cost over \$1 billion. And it's not even officially being discussed. INDOT says there is no project planned for US 30. But the Indiana state legislature's decision to raise road funds by raising the gas tax, and the fact that Governor Holcomb mentioned the idea in his State of the State address, are both encouraging to members of the US 30 Coalition. There is hope that plans for the project will be added to the state's "to do" list in the coming year. <http://wane.com/2017/11/16/deadly-corridor-turning-us-30-into-a-freeway/>

Brinegar: Tolling 'Not a Forgone Conclusion'

Inside Indiana Business

Dan McGowan

11/16/17

INDIANAPOLIS - The General Assembly has opened up the possibility of additional interstate tolling, a concept Indiana Chamber of Commerce President Kevin Brinegar says, while not a done deal, is the "most realistic" method of filling potential funding gaps for road work in the future. The Indiana Department of Transportation recently released a feasibility study on tolling, which suggests revenue from collections could exceed \$53 billion between 2021 and 2050.

Brinegar says expanding tolling beyond the Indiana Toll Road in northern Indiana and across the Ohio River Bridges in southeast Indiana is "not a forgone conclusion," but he says it could help offset costs like maintenance on interstates that are being widened all throughout the state. The feasibility study, Brinegar says, is a first step in a process that would take several years. During an interview with Inside INdiana Business Television, Brinegar discussed how the state might proceed. "The General assembly did give the governor the authority to unilaterally decide whether to pursue tolling and where to pursue it.," Brinegar said. "And they will look at where the greatest need is, and what revenue is likely to be generated from that segment of highway, then determine what's the best approach and how to proceed." The feasibility study considered tolling scenarios along I-64, I-65, I-69, I-70, I-74 and I-94. Brinegar says 40 percent of tolling revenue would come from out-of-state drivers. The study suggests the combination of tolling, widening I-65 and I-70, and decreasing fuel taxes could boost Indiana's Gross State Product nearly \$27 billion over time. The 2018 General Assembly kicks off next Wednesday at the Statehouse and the Indiana Chamber will provide its annual Legislative Preview Monday in Indianapolis.

<http://www.insideindianabusiness.com/story/36864762/brinegar-tolling-not-a-forgone-conclusion>

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